



Horseshoe Bend NMP Office Orders

Office Order #48: Requests for Weddings, Reception, and Similar Events Effective Date: April 18, 2007

Approved: _____

1. Purpose: To establish policy for public requests to hold weddings, public receptions and similar special events on park grounds
2. References: DO-53, RM-53, Executive Order 11246
3. NPS Policy: A special park use is a short-term activity that takes place in a park area and:
 - Provides a benefit to an individual, group or organization, rather than the public at large;
 - Requires written authorization and some degree of management control from the NPS in order to protect park resources and the public interest;
 - Is not prohibited by law or regulation; and
 - Is neither initiated, sponsored, nor conducted by the NPS.

The approval or denial of requests to engage in special park uses is an important and continuing responsibility of superintendents. *Superintendents should be aware that local decisions related to permitting special park uses may have Service-wide implications, and set precedents that create difficulties for other superintendents. In such instances, the superintendent should consult with the regional or Service-wide specialist.*

A special park use may involve either rights or privileges, and may or may not support the purposes for which a park was established. In either case, whether the request is approved or denied, the superintendent's decision must be able to withstand review, challenge and litigation. Whether the request is approved or denied, the superintendent's decision must be consistent with service-wide policies and consistent with decisions made on both a park and on a service-wide basis. The judicial standard of review is whether the decision is "arbitrary and capricious."

HOBE Policy:

Horseshoe Bend NMP permits weddings within the park boundaries at three locations:

- Lawn area behind the Visitor Center
- Picnic Area across from the Visitor Center
- Picnic Area adjacent to the Boat Ramp

Anyone requesting information on holding a wedding in the park should be sent a copy of the Horseshoe Bend National Military Park Application for Special Use Permit (NPS Form 10-920) and a copy of the Wedding Permit Conditions. Both can be printed out from [Shareall://RMVP/Permits/Weddings](#). Additionally, copies should be maintained at the information desk.

Permits and Fees

A copy of the conditions required will be signed by a responsible party and attached to the Special Use Permit. A copy of the signed permit and conditions will be given to the applicant.

No administrative fees will be collected for weddings.

Receptions and Support Activities

- All activities associated with conducting the wedding are limited to the picnic areas. The only exception is that photographs of wedding participants may be taken throughout the park.
- All wedding participants and attendees must comply with park rules and regulations.
- Parking is limited to the picnic areas and the eastern half of the Visitor Center parking lot. These constraints require weddings to be limited to no more than 120 attendees and participants combined.
- The ceremony, set up, and take down activities must all be accomplished within regular hours of operation. It is suggested that the entire wedding process should be limited to no more than 2 hours.
- No public address or amplifiers should be used as a part of the ceremony. Non-amplified musical instruments may be used. Pre-recorded music may be played during the ceremony as long as it does not interfere with or detract from other visitor activities or experiences in the park.
- The park does not provide any support for wedding activities. The permittees are completely responsible for the set up, take down, and clean up for ceremonies and receptions. The park will insure that the area is maintained in the manner as the remainder of the park but is not responsible for extraordinary measures such as power washing, repainting or restriping, or similar activities.
- Permittees are limited to up to two small tables (not to exceed six feet in length each) for the event such as the guest book, flowers, or gift reception. A small portable arch or similar bower is permissible as long as no ground disturbance or similar impacts are made to park resources. In general, nothing should be affixed to any park resources or features, particularly nothing requiring nails, staples, or similar intrusive means of attaching materials. All items must be transported to/from the ceremony site from the parking area by hand or small hand truck. Vehicles are limited to paved or gravel parking areas.
- Because Horseshoe Bend is a unit of the National Park System with firm commitments to protection of all park resources, it is not permissible to throw rice, bird seed, or similar items as a part of the festivities. Feeding wildlife is illegal.
- No signs may be placed in the park to direct people to the ceremony or otherwise include or exclude people in the park. No park facilities or features may be marked or painted in any way.
- Typical visitor activities may not be disrupted by the wedding activities. Use of the picnic shelters and picnic tables will remain on a first come, first served basis. The receipt of a Special Use Permit does not reserve or guarantee use of a shelter.
- Failure to comply with the conditions of the permit and park regulations may result in:
 - ✓ Revocation of the permit at any time
 - ✓ Civil or criminal actions
 - ✓ Denial of any future permit requests

Constitutional Rights

Weddings do not fall under First Amendment activities and are not considered “freedom of speech.”